

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



YESHIVA ZEEV HATORAH

[www.zeevhatorah.org](http://www.zeevhatorah.org)

For sponsorship and to subscribe please email [zeevmainoffice@gmail.com](mailto:zeevmainoffice@gmail.com)

## תשפ"ה רב בראזיל פארשאס לעח לעחא AVRAHAM AND THE BROKEN PASSUK וכרות עמו הברית

Two very important and from Nechemya 9,8 were established to say in *Pesukai D'zimrah* relating to the *davener* the greatness of Avraham Avinu and Hashem's chesed. They are recited after ' ויברך דוד את ה' as follows:

אתה הוא האלקים אשר בחרתי באברם והוצאת מאור כשדים ושמת שמו אברהם. ומצאת את לבבו נאמן לפניך וכרות עמו הברית לתת לו ארץ הכנעני וכול'

Unaware to many *mispallelim*, the way most *Siddurim* print these two *pessukim* are incorrect. In reality, the first *passuk* ends with the words ושמתי שמו אברהם. The second *passuk* commences with ומצאת את לבבו. Yet in most *Siddurim* the words וכרות עמו הברית begins a new *passuk* or a new paragraph. The *Baal Tefillah* also emphasizes this alteration from the *passuk* by also ending with ומצאת את לבבו נאמן לפניך and the *tzibbur* begins anew וכרות עמו הברית. How did this colossal error fall into our *Siddurim*?

The Torah Temimah in his *sefer* Baruch S'hamar on *tefillah* answers that there is another old custom that is performed in many *Kehillos* when there is a *Bris* to take place, the *Baal Tefillah* stops right before וכרות עמו הברית and is replaced by a *Chazzan* who sings the *pessukim* that has to do with *Bris Milah* in honor of the *Baalei Simcha*. The first *passuk* is וכרות עמו הברית. Even though this word of *Bris* seemingly is referring to give the land of *Eretz Yisrael* to Avraham's children, *Chazal* also interpret it with a direct reference to *Bris Milah*, and the word וכרות means to cut off the foreskin. Avraham who was at the age of 99 was afraid of performing this act at his age so Hashem placed His hand on Avraham's and together they cut off the *orlah*, skin. This is alluded to in the *passuk* וכרות עמו that Hashem cut **with** him and not לו to him. After he finishes the *pessukim*, the regular *Baal Tefillah* returns and continues from where the *Chazzan* left off.

If one will ask how can they split the *passuk* in half. The answer to this question is that because of the occasion of a *Bris Milah* and singing to Hashem, it was allowed to happen. As the generations passed, people forgot the original *takanah* that the splitting of a *passuk* was established for an actual event celebrating a *Bris Milah*. That is why today we have *Siddurim* that present this *passuk* not as one with its entirety but rather with its split starting with וכרות עמו.

I have seen over the years this *minhag* at a *Bris* with a few differences. They did not stop at וכרות עמו הברית but rather continued to say *passuk* by *passuk* through the אז ישיר as well. Also it was not the *chazzan* who took over the *Baal Tefillah* but the *Mohel*. We can explain this אז ישיר inclusion in the extended וכרות עמו הברית by understanding the *shir* that is sung at a *Bris Milah* which is שירה חדשה יום ליבשה נהפכו מצולים שירה חדשה. שבחו גאולים. What is the connection between *Kerias Yam Suf* and *Bris Milah*? The Rambam in *Moreh Nevuchim* writes that the reason for *Bris Milah* is because it lessens the drive for immoral sensuous lusts which are derived from the element of water within a person. That is why Yosef's victory over his desires while being seduced by the wife of Potifar merited him with the ability to divide the waters of *Yam Suf* as *Chazal* tell us in the *passuk* הים ראה וינוס שראה ארונו של יוסף שרץ החוצה. Removing the waters of *Yam Suf* from covering the earth into two standing walls, is like removing the ערלה from the organ of the *Bris* and revealing what is underneath.

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



YESHIVA ZEEV HATORAH

[www.zeevhatorah.org](http://www.zeevhatorah.org)

For sponsorship and to subscribe please email [zeevmainoffice@gmail.com](mailto:zeevmainoffice@gmail.com)

Another relationship that *Milah* has with the Splitting of the *Yam Suf* is that it begins with the word **אז** *gematriah* 8 a number which symbolizes above nature such as the 8 days of Chanukah and the 8 days of *Milah* when we permanently change the natural form of the human body.

Let us take another look at this *passuk* in the understanding that **וכרות עמו הברית** means the mitzvah of *Milah*. What then is the connection to conquering the Seven Nations dwelling in *Eretz Cannan*? We can answer this with the explanation of *Milah* given by the *Sefer Hachinuch*. Two foreskins exist, one on the reproductive organ and the other that covers the heart. The *passuk* says **ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם ומל ה'** *passuk* says **ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם ומל ה'** one must circumcise his heart. By circumcising the physical foreskin over one's organ he will become inspired to also circumcise the *orlah* on his heart.

In the heart lie the *middos* which one must perfect. The *sefarim* write that the Seven Nations that were dwelling in *Eretz Yisrael*, correspond to the Seven *Middos* in one's heart. By removing the *ערלה* of the reproductive organ and the one on your heart you will foster and nurture good *Middos* which will guarantee *Yisrael* the ability to conquer the Seven Nations in *Eretz Israel*, fulfilling **וכרות עמו הברית לתת להם ארץ הכנעני** וכול.

The Two Thousand years of Torah began with Avraham Avinu as *Chazal* say that the *gematriah* of **אברהם** is 248 which corresponds to the **248** Positive Mitzvos. The study of Torah aids one to discipline his *yetzer harah* and remove the foreskin over one's heart transforming a *Yid* into a servant of Hashem with good *middos*. Note that **two** times **ערלה**, one, the removal of the outer *orlah* and secondly the removal of the inner one over your heart, add up to **תורה** with the word itself.

Let us suggest another interpretation why *minhag Yisrael* is to split the *passuk* and begin with **וכרות עמו הברית**. First of all the word **וכרות** breaks away from the previous verbs which are in the form of the past tense **שמת מצאת**. The *Yaavetz* writes that the word **וכרות** initiates a separation by being written in the *paol* form which denotes ongoing activity such as **את יום השבת זכור** "be remembering" as *Rashi* explains (*Shmos* 20,8). If **וכרות** was consistent with the flow of the previous *thought*, it would have been written in the form of the past **וכרת**. Why then did the *passuk* change form?

Secondly, **לפניך מצאת את לבבו נאמן לפניך**, why is the term **מצאת** (found) used here? Also the word **לפניך** is superfluous? The *Sfas Emes* תרנ"ג addresses the *lashon* of **מצאת**.

ובאברהם נתקיים מי הקדמני ואשלם. כי באמת בני ישראל הקב"ה נתן להם זה הדרך בכח הברית מילה כמ"ש מי יעלה לנו השמימה. ובכח זה כתיב ביוסף וינס ויצא החוצה. אבל אברהם אע"ה קודם המילה לא הי' נמצא דרך בגוף איך להעלות אותו מן התלבושות הטבע רק מרוב אמונה שבו וז"ש ומצאת את לבבו. שב' לבבות הם יצ"ט ויצה"ר. וכדי לאהוב ה' בשני לבבות נתן לנו הקב"ה ברית מילה שהוא למול ערלת הלב של היצה"ר בכח הברית. אבל אברהם אע"ה בב' לבבות האמין בו ית' והוא מציאה גדולה שמצא הקב"ה בעולם וכן דרשו חז"ל בפ' לבתני באחד כו' שהוא על אאע"ה כו'. ובזכות זו כרת עמו הברית ונתן לו ולזרעו עצה איך למול ערלת הלב כנ"ל:

Hashem commanded Avraham with the mitzvah of *Bris Milah* with the purpose that it would influence him to circumcise the foreskin on his heart which includes the *yetzer harah* (לבבו hinting to two parts of the heart). However Hashem found that Avraham even before the actual *Bris Milah*, was already holding by the goal himself through *emunah*. Avraham's spiritual *madraigah* was Hashem's biggest "find" in the world ע"כ. את האלקים התהלך נח *tzadik* Noach walked with Hashem for he needed Hashem's help to direct him. Avraham earned the title of *חסיד* beyond the call to duty. He reached the levels of piety and righteousness on his own before he was tested by Hashem prior to even Hashem's first communication with him.

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



YESHIVA ZEEV HATORAH

[www.zeevhatorah.org](http://www.zeevhatorah.org)

For sponsorship and to subscribe please email [zeevmainoffice@gmail.com](mailto:zeevmainoffice@gmail.com)

This is *presented* in the *passuk* והוצאת מאור כשדים which is referring to the episode where he was thrown into a fiery furnace for his refusal to accept other deities instead of Hashem. Concerning Avraham Rashi says ibid והתהלך לפני go before Me. Avraham preceded Hashem in reaching *shelaimus* as a true *chossid* would do.

This is hinted in our *passuk* ומצאת את לבבו נאמן לפניך, conveying that Avraham's heart was totally dedicated and faithful נאמן to the service of Hashem before he was asked to go through tests.

The *passuk* ומצאת את לבבו נאמן לפניך continues with וזכרות עמו הברית לתת לו ארץ כנען. This connection can be viewed as a condition of the Bris, that it must be preceded with the piety level of לבבו נאמן לפניך the *madraiga* of *chosid*. As we mentioned above וזכרות is in the form of constant activity and not a one shot deal forever. It could be seen as a Bris between Yisrael and Hashem and *Eretz Yisrael*, one to be reviewed over and over again to see if Yisrael are still holding by the same level of *Avraham*.

A similar situation was with Yaakov when he received the *berachos* from Yitzchak dressed in Aisav's clothing. The reason being that the *berachos* will be bestowed on *Yisrael* only when they act like Yaakov by his dress and speech. If they will speak like Aisav and dress like him they will not merit the *berachos* anymore. This was the reason why Yaakov feigned to be Aisav in order to ensure that even in the future if *Yisrael* are deficient in *ruchniyus* they should nevertheless be able to receive the *berachos*. The same compliance could apply to our *Bris* and *Eretz Yisrael* because it too is conditional. Therefore the *lashon* of וזכרות in the *poel* form breaks away from the ומצאת את לבבו נאמן לפניך so there can never be a *kitrug* against our *Bris* with Hashem and *Eretz Yisrael* due to our failure to fulfill the condition. It is therefore that the *minhag* of *Yisrael* came about that this *passuk* of וזכרות is tantamount to a new beginning.

One might ask what right do we have to split up the *passuk* this way when it simply means that a condition does exist as it directly precedes וזכרות עמו הברית? The answer to this is in one word ומצאת את לבבו נאמן which includes all the future generations of *Yisrael* (סידור חלקת יהושע). That Avraham accomplished that each *Yid* has a precious spark that remains pure and never becomes adulterated, and that it longs to have a *chossid* relationship with Hashem and not just *tzaddik* one. Therefore that condition is never broken. Not every *Yid* is aware of his incredible possession of such a deep and intimate relationship, but Hashem knows. Therefore on the surface the *passuk* is split just as the *Yam* split its waters into two parts to ward off any *kitrug* that could come about. There was a *kitrug* at *Kerias Yam Suf* that we are just as bad as the *Mitzrim* and why should they drown and *Yisrael* be saved. However we were saved as we sang ואנוהו which is word composed of two והוא אני me and Hashem are one entity (Shabbos 132b Rashi). A *Yid* never loses his attachment to Hashem. Splitting the *passuk* is parallel to splitting of the *Yam Suf* and *Milah* a supernatural act of revealing what is underneath the surface. Only on the outside we must separate the *passuk* but in the inside it is not necessary for the condition is always fulfilled.

Gut Shabbos,

Rav Brazil